

Statement by Dugan Daniels

1 message

Dugan Daniels <[REDACTED]>

Sun, Nov 22, 2020 at 6:24 AM

To: [REDACTED]

I am writing this statement at your request. Sorry it's taken me a while as my phone is only source of internet and have had a hard time getting good enough service on the boat to get it completed.

I would like to start out stating that I in no way thought I was doing anything illegal as I had made a few calls approximately 2 weeks before this incident to inquire about fishing inside and outside waters during the same trip so I could make the best use of my time with the terrible weather patterns we had been experiencing and the closure of the season fast approaching. I had also contacted the observer office at least a month prior to that asking a similar question about multiple area logging for a trip and thought I knew the rules. I left Ketchikan with a completely new crew to longlining and a not so hot weather forecast. Having thought I understood the rules and regs I made two halibut sets in Chatham strait after a friend had been black cod fishing there the week before and told me there was a lot of very nice halibut where he had been fishing. These two sets gave the new crew a chance to see how gear is deployed and hauled back with my operation in relatively calm waters. Everything went fine and after hauling back both sets we continued up to icy strait and on out to cross sound hoping for a weather window to meet my obligations to the permit holders I had given my word to that I would get there fish caught as its there only source of income and almost all of the permit holders I fish there qouta for Are elderly people counting on this income. After coming out of south inian pass to find gale force winds if not storm force I anchored my vessel in Granite cove By George island just outside of elfin cove. The next morning we made sure everything was ship shape on deck as it was still very windy and tough seas. With a forecast calling for it to come down later I. The day for a couple days I headed out to sea about half way between yakobi rock and surge bay I received a text from a friend who told me there was good black cod fishing in what we call the cross sound gully which saved me another 20-30 mile run out to the black cod edge or continental shelf. So I took his advice and made a couple sets. To my surprise it was very good cod fishing and I saw a glimmer of hope to get the fish I gave my word to catch actually looking very obtainable after 2.5 weeks of miserable weather and fishing prior to this trip. So at this point I just put my head down and did what we do and fished to the best of my ability with not so seasoned crew. I had no thoughts whatsoever about the 2c/3a halibut line which several of my sets started on one side of line and ended on the other as well as sets entirely on the 2c side and also entirely on the 3a side. I solely admit my wrong doing of this act I thought because I had already got my halibut in Chatham and that I was just black cod fishing that I was doing things properly. I would also like to point out that the prior 2.5 weeks of longlining and 2 weeks of shrimping and 2 months of longlining before shrimp Had left me pretty much physically and mentally exhausted to a point very few people ever experience in there lives this I know is no excuse for what happened I just want you to understand the stress and physical/mental state I was in at that point. The last day of the trip a friend was in Sitka looking at the MarineTraffic App. And called me to inform me that I was making a big mistake. I asked him what he was talking about and he told me about the halibut line and responded to him that I caught my halibut in Chatham and that I wasn't keeping any halibut whatsoever while fishing cod and he informed me he thought I was possibly using illegal gear. The observer was on another 24 hr byeday light. The next day we hauled

back out black cod sets and headed to Juneau to sell. When I got good enough service to try and look up the rules and find out what they stated I was overwhelmed and lost with the website's instructions as to where and how to find them I went thru as much as I could until rounding point Adolphus to find myself in a 50 knot hrs wind and horrible seas so I put the rule searching and education aside to focus on keeping the boat and crew safe and made my way to Auke Bay where I anchored until my offload at I believe was noon that day. Upon arrival at dock I was greeted by you and the LPHC lady and we decided it best that you board my vessel and look at my situation and help me understand my wrong doing. I see know my mistake and as I stated to you I may have had it happen one other time this season (as there was the trip I called the observers back regarding multiple area trip at on that trip I may or may not of had 3a halibut still to fish so I am not sure if I was good or not on that trip. I have been up front and completely honest with everyone involved in this situation and am very sorry for my mistake it gets very confusing with all the rules sometimes which I know is no excuse but I have been working with you in my prior ignorance issues and trying to do things legal. I work very hard to make sure my operation is up to speed with everything required to go fishing and feel just sick about this infraction. I am available for anything you may request from me and would just like to get this handled and put to rest as 2020 has been a very very difficult season. I would also like to point out that I have a VMS and if I had known I was in the wrong it would have been very stupid to do what I did with a VMS with the intent of breaking the rules as you can see I fished where I did unaware I was not legal until it was too late. If there is anything I can do to help with this please call me at [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I will be in Juneau by Monday November 23 if you need to speak with me in person again. Thank you for your patience with me sincerely, Dugan Daniels FV Pacific Bounty

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